



Healthy skin is a natural barrier that prevents infection. A break in your skin makes it possible for germs to enter your body. Covering your wound will help to keep it clean and heal faster.

## **Your Nurse Will Show You:**

- How to take care of your dressing
- When and how to change your dressing
- What to watch for as your wound heals

## **Call the Wound Care Center® Staff Immediately if You Notice:**

- Increased pain at the wound site
- Excess drainage wets the dressing before it is time to change the dressing
- Redness or swelling around or spreading away from the wound
- Foul odor coming from the wound
- Change in color or amount of drainage from the wound
- Fever and chills
- Nausea or vomiting

## **Changing Your Dressing:**

- 1.** Gather the supplies you will need for your dressing change:
  - Trash bag
  - Wound cleanser
  - Hand washing supplies
  - Tape or gauze wrap to hold your dressing in place
- 2.** Wash your hands with soap and water. Put on gloves if available.
- 3.** Prepare a clean working area.
- 4.** Take your dressing off carefully. Throw away the old dressing in a trash bag. Try to keep the wound clean.
- 5.** Look at your wound closely. Look for any foul odors; change in color or amount of drainage; redness or swelling around the wound; or redness spreading away from the wound.
- 6.** Wash your hands with soap and water.
- 7.** Clean your wound using the cleanser prescribed by your healthcare provider.

8. Put on a new dressing.
9. Put the plastic bag with the old dressing in another plastic bag and put directly in the trash. This is called 'double bagging'.
10. Wash your hands one last time with soap and water.

## General Information

- Change your dressing as directed by the Wound Care Center staff or if it gets dirty or wet.
- Do not put anything into an open wound that is not prescribed by your physician.
- Change your dressing as close to hand washing facilities as possible.

## Storing Your Dressing Supplies

- Always keep your clean dressings in a storage container that has a lid and is kept off of the floor away from children and pets. A plastic container with a lid or clean large plastic bag that can be tied shut will be best.
- When preparing a clean working area, use a paper towel or other clean cover to put your supplies on. DO NOT put supplies directly on a table or bed.

## Helping Your Wound Heal

- Keep the outside of your dressing clean and dry. If it becomes soiled or wet, change it as soon as possible.
- Keep your body clean. Bathe daily with soap and water as allowed by your wound care provider. Change your dressing after your bath or shower.
- Eat a well-balanced diet. Follow special dietary or fluid restrictions that your doctor has discussed.
- Examine your wound carefully every time you remove your dressing. Immediately report any changes to your Wound Care Center staff.

## The Proper Way to Wash Hands

- Remove your jewelry before washing your hands so that the spaces between your fingers can be cleaned and dried.
- Adjust the water temperature and lather your hands with soap.
- Rub your hands together, cleaning the front and back of each hand up to the wrist and between all fingers for 20 seconds (sing the Happy Birthday song 2 times or the chorus of Yankee Doodle is about 20 seconds).
- Rinse well.
- If possible turn the faucets off with a paper towel or towel.

### References: